

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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TAGS: AORG, APER, UN

SUBJ: G-LEVEL SALARY DISPUTE

REF: (A) GENEVA 2888, (B) USUN 1572

1. RUMORS OF IMPENDING STRIKES HAVE GIVEN WAY TO SPREADING OF REPORT THAT 12 PERCENT INCREASE HAS BEEN OFFERED BY DEBATIN AND QUESTION BEING ASKED NOW IS WHETHER STAFF REPRESENTATIVES WILL REGARD THIS AS HIGH ENOUGH. PROBABLY AT DEBATIN'S INSISTENCE, CONTENTS OF ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS IS BEING HELD IN CLOSER CONFIDENCE THAN EVER WAS CASE BEFORE. WE KNOW THAT ONLY LIMITED NUMBER WITHIN ILO ARE KEPT INFORMED, AND HAVE IMPRESSION THIS IS CASE IN OTHER ADMINSTRATIONS ALSO. NEGOTIATIONS HAVE CONTINUED INTO AFTERNOON OF APRIL 15 WITH STATUS AND RESULTS UNKNOWN TO US.

2. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE FRG AMBASSADOR HERBST ONCE AGAIN CONVENED CONSULTATIVE GROUP (CONSISTING NOW OF FRG, FRANCE, ITALY, NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, UK, JAPAN, SWITZERLAND AND US) TO CONSIDER SITUATION.

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HERBST REPORTED THAT DEBATIN HAD TOLD HIM THAT "HARD-

LINERS" AMONG STAFF REPRESENTATIVES HAVE INSISTED ON AT LEAST 20 PERCENT, WHEREAS "SOFTLINERS" APPEAR READY TO SETTLE FOR ABOUT 15 PERCENT. DEBATIN TOLD HERBST THAT HE FELT OBLIGATED TO DEVELOP THE ADMINISTRATION POSITION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK ESTABLISHED BY THREE ELEMENTS:

(A) GA RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING "BEST PREVAILING" CRITERION, (B) PERSONNEL REGULATIONS REFLECTING THIS, AND (C) BATTELLE SURVEY RESULTS. TAKING THESE THREE ELEMENTS INTO ACCOUNT, DEBATIN HAD CONCLUDED THAT 12 PERCENT REPRESENTED A REASONABLE OFFER.

3. WE HAVE IT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE THAT, IN FACT, 12 PERCENT REPRESENTS THE ABSOLUTE UPWARD LIMIT WITHIN WHICH DEBATIN HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED BY SYG WALDHEIM TO NEGOTIATE, AND THAT WALDHEIM IS ADAMANT ABOUT THIS CEILING EVEN IF HE MUST FACE A STRIKE TO SEE IT ENFORCED.

4. IT HAS BEEN CALCULATED THAT A 12 PERCENT INCREASE IN G-LEVEL SALARIES WOULD COST ILO DOLLARS 5.2 MILLION IN THE CURRENT BIENNIUM (ASSUMING THE RETROACTIVITY PROVISIONS AGREED IN FEBRUARY ARE RETAINED.). THE INCREASED COST FOR ALL GENEVA OFFICES TOGETHER IN THE CURRENT BIENNIUM WOULD RUN ABOUT DOLLARS 12 MILLION ACCORDING TO THE BEST ESTIMATE WE HAVE. IF THE BATTELLE FIGURES WERE TO BE IMPLEMENTED, THE COST FOR ALL WOULD BE ABOUT DOLLARS 25 MILLION.

5. WHILE THE BATTELLE REPORT IS A SALARY COMPARABILITY SURVEY, THE RESULTS OF WHICH DEBATIN SCALED DOWN TO REACH HIS 12 PERCENT FIGURE, WE ARE INFORMED THAT THE SWISS COST OF LIVING SURVEY (OFIANT) COINCIDENTLY POINTS ALSO TO 12 PERCENT INCREASE FOR 1976 ON A COST OF LIVING BASIS.

6. IN VIEW OF COURSE NEGOTIATIONS ARE TAKING HERBST PROPOSED IN CONSULTATIVE MEETING THAT GENEVA MISSIONS MOVE QUICKLY AND RECOMMEND TO CAPITALS THAT DEMARCHE BE MADE TO WALDHEIM IN NEW YORK URGING HIM "TO REFRAIN FROM CONCLUDING IMMEDIATELY FINAL ARRANGEMENTS ON WAGE INCREASES" AND "TO SUBMIT THE WAGE CONFLICT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOGETHER WITH ALL FURTHER RELEVANT ELEMENTS TO THE 31ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION." HERBST ARGUED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES HAD CHANGED SINCE ELEMENTS NOW GUIDING NEGOTIATIONS (PARA 2 ABOVE) WERE ADOPTED AND BOTH SIDES TO NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD, IN EFFECT, BE TOLD BY GOVERNMENTS THEY NO LONGER APPLY. THERE WAS SOME SYMPATHY FOR HIS ARGUMENT BUT NO SUPPORT FOR HIS PROPOSAL.ABRAMS

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